

MIRECC Executive Committee

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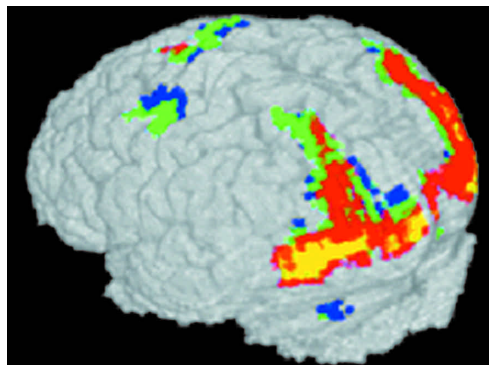
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NEUROIMAGING CORE

Gregory G. Brown, Ph.D. heads the Neuro-imaging Core, which uses a special imaging technique (fMRI) to visualize the brain as it performs complex tasks. Functional brain imaging provides a valuable bridge between clinical studies assessing cognitive functions and the basic neuroscience underlying these processes. This group coordinates such studies at San Diego, West Los Angeles and Long Beach.



fMRI of human brain after visual stimulation

DATA CORE

The Data Core provides support in the areas of experimental design, data collection and analysis, access to local and national VA utilization and cost databases, and computing software and hardware. Under the leadership of Jim Mintz, Ph. D., the data core staff works as a collaborative unit with MIRECC investigators during each phase of research, methodology and design through implementation and data analysis.

VA DESERT PACIFIC
HEALTHCARE NETWORK

MIRECC

Mental Illness Research, Education
and Clinical Centers

***Dedicated to
improving the
long-term
functional outcome
of individuals with
psychotic disorders
through innovative
research, clinical care and
educational programs.***

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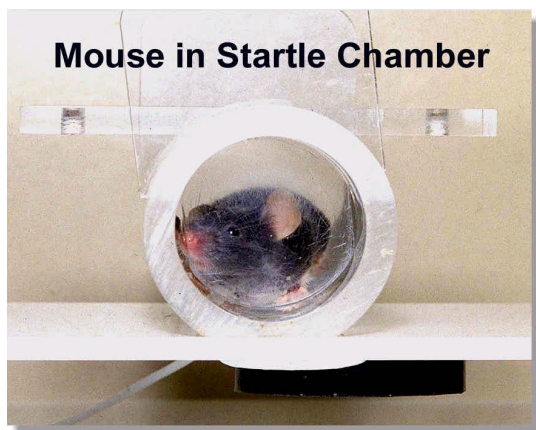
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People with psychotic illnesses require a comprehensive approach to treatment with attention paid not only to their symptoms, but to their ability to function in society and their quality of life. Our approach to improved function involves combining the work of four separate domains; Neuroscience, Treatment, Health Services and Education, into a cohesive integrated network of researchers, clinicians and educators. Each of these domains has a different focus yet each unit works closely with the others and with Neuroimaging and Data Cores to form a tightly woven, collaborative whole.

NEUROSCIENCE UNIT

The Neuroscience Unit is divided into two collaborative groups, basic and clinical neuroscience, with strong affiliation with a neuroimaging core. These groups, directed by James Lohr, M.D. and Mark Geyer, Ph.D., conduct research focused on brain dysfunctions and the neurocognitive deficits associated with psychotic illnesses.

Animal models are being developed that mimic the intricacies of brain circuit abnormalities found in patients with



schizophrenia. These will be used to help in understanding the mechanisms of action of new drugs. Studies are underway examining differences in the way sensory information is processed in animal models as well as patients with schizophrenia.

TREATMENT UNIT

Headed by Stephen R. Marder, M.D. this unit considers impediments to optimal functioning from the point of view of specific treatments.



This group develops and tests new psychosocial interventions utilizing innovations from the Neuroscience and Health Services Units. For example a current multisite clinical trial is underway, examining the effects of drugs on neurocognition and information processing in patients with psychosis. The belief is that improved cognition will enhance the patients' ability to benefit from psychosocial therapies.

HEALTH SERVICES UNIT

People with psychotic disorders often receive poor quality care. Under the direction of Alexander Young, M.D. M.S.H.S., the Health Services unit works to better understand the cost, quality, and effectiveness of care and to develop and implement methods for improving the quality of this care. Studies are currently underway to develop improved methods for monitoring the quality of care, to test interventions designed to increase use of mental health rehabilitation and self-help programs and to better understand the factors influencing provider behavior. We are particularly interested in factors that influence the way providers disseminate antipsychotic medications.

EDUCATION UNIT

The Education Dissemination Unit (EDU) is co-directed by Christopher Reist, M.D. and Sonia Ancoli-Israel, Ph.D. and provides a link between the VA MIRECC research staff and the VA and non-VA community. The EDU presents yearly CME certified conferences, publishes a quarterly newsletter, MindView, and maintains a web site which provides educational materials and links to valuable resources on the Internet, www.mirecc.org.

